

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7270

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IT

SUBJECT: SECDEF MEETING WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE FORLANI

1. FOLLOWING ON RECENT PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL OF LONG RANGE ITALIAN NAVY CONSTRUCTION PLAN, OTHER ITALIAN SERVICES ARE PROPOSING SIMILAR PROGRAMS. PROGNOSIS FOR ITALIAN AIR FORCE PROGRAM FAVORABLE. WE HAVE LEARNED, HOWEVER, THAT ITALIAN ARMY PROPOSALS HAVE ENCOUNTERED SOME POLITICAL RESISTANCE WHICH COULD JEOPARDIZE IMPORTANT FORCE RESTRUCTURING PLANNED TO IMPROVE CAPABILITY AND READINESS OF ARMY IN THE FACE OF SIGNIFICANT PERSONNEL CUTS.

2. IF SECRETARY HAS OCCASION PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH FORLANI, WE WOULD RECOMMEND HE MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS.

A. CONGRATULATE MINISTER OF SIGNIFICANT NAVY CONSTRUCTION LEGISLATION.

B. EXPRESS HOPE THAT OTHER SERVICES, ESPECIALLY ARMY, WILL ALSO BENEFIT FROM SIMILAR PROGRAM, EMPHASIZING KEY ROLE PLAYED BY ITALIAN LAND FORCES IN NATO PLANNING, AND NEED TO SUPPORT FORCE RESTRUCTURING PLANS IN LIGHT HIGH PERSONNEL COSTS AND PERSONNEL REDUCTIONS. VOLPE

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